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REMARKS

You will remember that
 told us
that Melzac is interested
in meeting and
lunching with each
DCI. Bruce is aware.
Marie

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FROM: (Name, org. symbol, Agency/Post)	Room No.—Bldg.
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11 March 1981

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD:

FROM: Bruce T. Johnson
Chairman, Fine Arts Commission

DDIA REGISTRY

FILE: *meetings*

SUBJECT: Luncheon with Vincent Melzac, 11 March 1981

By prior arrangement, [] former Chairman of the Fine Arts Commission, and I met with Mr. Vincent Melzac at noon at the restaurant "Chez Froggy," the time and place having been selected by Mr. Melzac. The latter was already at the table when we arrived at the appointed hour.

STAT

STAT The early part of the conversation involved Mr. Melzac's interest in his farm near Romney, West Virginia, and his horses, an interest shared by []. Mr. Melzac described his plans for a trip to the southwest where he hoped to buy some Egyptian strain Arabian horses and where he planned to look for real estate for possible permanent relocation. I expressed surprise that someone so identified with the Washington region would choose to move so far away, but he explained his farm is ripe for redevelopment efforts in a growing region and he indicated that he does not want to be around to watch a shopping center go up where his farm has been.

Turning to art, Mr. Melzac said that he had been visited the day before by Miss Mary Foresta, an Assistant Curator at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American Art (NMAA). Miss Foresta is planning an October exhibition of the works of Alma Thomas, several of whose works Mr. Melzac possesses. He suggested that it would be relatively easy for him to approach the Smithsonian to suggest that the same exhibition, or part of it, might be subsequently loaned to the Agency for a two or three months display. He went on to suggest that this could be the first of a series of one artist shows designed to introduce the representative artists of the Washington Color School to the employees of the Agency. He mentioned his close association with Joshua Taylor, curator of the NMAA, and suggested (after I had written down Miss Foresta's name) that contact with the NMAA be made by Mr. Melzac on our behalf with Mr. Taylor.

I admitted to great interest in such an idea but reminded Mr. Melzac that we had a very new management team in the Agency who were addressing more pressing issues than the question of art

exhibits and that it would probably be some time before I can ascertain the degree of interest which Director Casey or DDA Hugel might have in this subject. He was most understanding of this point, realizing that it would be some time before we could expect them to turn their attention to such matters. He did indicate, however, that he hoped he would have an opportunity to meet Director Casey at some time in the future.

We talked further about exhibits and about the fact that abstract forms such as those of the Washington Color School were not appealing to all audiences. I found him remarkably democratic on this subject and quite ready to admit that many people do not like this style of art. This led to a discussion of the possibility that through his contacts with various galleries and collections around the country he might be able to arrange for the extended loan of other works of art, some of them more traditional in nature. He suggested specifically that we might attempt to mount an exhibition of western art and spoke enthusiastically about the contributions of Remington as an action painter of western scenes.

We then turned to the possible rotation or exchange of canvasses now on display in the Headquarters building, starting with the question of storage. I told him that I had been able to identify storage space which was temperature and humidity controlled, but it did not have doors big enough to accommodate large canvases and their frames. He told me they have learned in the last few years to anticipate this problem by building collapsible frames hinged in such a way as to permit paintings to be folded once and stored more readily in their reduced configuration. We agreed that we should try to modify the frames used on the paintings in the Agency to take advantage of this idea.

We agreed that I would send him a list of the paintings which we would like to rotate and he would then make some suggestions about replacements. Following such an exchange, he would arrange for the Selection Committee to go to the warehouse in Lorton to make the final selections. I told him I would try to have my letter in his hands shortly after he returns from his trip to New Mexico, i.e., before the end of March.

In his memo covering the previous meetings, [] had STAT remarked on Mr. Melzac's poor health. At this meeting the health problem was not apparent, although he referred at least once to his age (71) and he did take several pills both before and after lunch. He also avoided the use of salt during the meal, commenting on a heart condition.

I came away from the meeting feeling that we had achieved a remarkable degree of rapport and had built a basis for future discussions which would be of benefit to the work of the Fine Arts Commission. He offered to come out to speak to the Commission or subcommittees about the various ideas we had discussed, but no specific arrangements for such a visit were made. We exchanged telephone numbers for ease of future contact and parted amicably at about 1:20 p.m.

[Redacted Signature]

Bruce P. Johnson

STAT

cc: EO/ODP